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GOING A STEP FURTHER: VALERIUS FLACCUS' METAPOETICAL READING OF PROPERTIUS' HYLAS*

I. RETROSPECTIVE INTERPRETATION

Propertius 1.20 poses many interpretative questions, which scholars have tried to solve not least by comparing the poem with other versions of the Hylas myth, notably those of Apollonius (*Argon.* 1.1153ff.) and Theocritus (*Id.* 13). The relationship of Propertius' poem to Valerius Flaccus' Hylas episode (*Argon.* 3.481ff.), however, has received little attention, although Valerius offers the most elaborate version of the myth.¹

Recently, Philip Hardie has initiated the approach of 'retrospective interpretation' for Valerius Flaccus' reading of Virgil's *Aeneid*. He has shown that Valerius—and other Flavian epic poets—read and interpret their most important model, Virgil's *Aeneid*, in a way that anticipates modern studies of intertextuality; it is therefore attractive to use Valerius' readings and interpretations of Virgil as a critical tool for our own reading of the *Aeneid*.²

But what about Valerius' other models? I would like to show through a few examples that in his Hylas episode Valerius has carefully read and interpreted Propertius 1.20 in a way that bears close resemblance to modern readings of Latin poetry. In addition I hope to show that Valerius also provides us with an interesting new interpretation of Propertius 1.20.

II. GOING FURTHER

That there is contact between Valerius' Hylas episode and Propertius 1.20 is very clear from a verbal echo that has often been noted³ but never subjected to close

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Propertius Colloquium held at Leiden University, 23 April 2004. I am most grateful to Joan Booth, Marte Cuypers, Stephen Heyworth, Hugo Koning, Damien Nelis and *CQ*'s anonymous reader for their valuable comments. Unless indicated otherwise, the translations of the texts used are taken and sometimes adapted from the most recent editions in the Loeb Series.

¹ A basic description of similarities and differences is offered by R. E. Colton, 'Influence of Propertius on Valerius Flaccus', *CB* 40.3 (1964), 35–42. The intertextual contact has been noted by M. A. Malamud and D. T. McGuire, 'Flavian variant: myth. Valerius' *Argonautica*', in A. J. Boyle (ed.), *Roman Epic* (London, 1993), 192–217. They focus among other things on the Hylas episode 'as a model of Valerius' use of myth and his method of dealing with earlier texts' (p. 194). Although I have made much use of their findings, my interpretation of the contact between the two versions of the Hylas story is more extensive and very different from theirs.

² See P. Hardie, 'Flavian epicists on Virgil's epic technique', in A. J. Boyle (ed.), *The Imperial Muse. Ramus Essays on Roman Literature of the Empire: Flavian Epicists to Claudian* (Bendigo, 1990), 3–20 (= *Ramus* 18 [1989], 3–20) and P. Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge, 1993) for a more extensive application of the approach.

³ See e.g. J. P. Postgate, *Selected Elegies of Propertius* (London, 1881), 97 ad 1.20.23; A. Grüneberg, *De Valerio Flacco imitatore* (Diss., Berlin, 1893), 88; W. C. Summers, *A Study of the Argonautica of Valerius Flaccus* (Cambridge, 1894), 36; C. Hosius, *Sex. Propertii elegiarum*

scrutiny. In Propertius, Hercules' companion Hylas is said to have gone off on his own:

at comes invicti iuvenis processerat ultra
raram sepositi quaerere fontis aquam. (Prop. 1.20.23–4)

But the squire of the invincible prince had gone forward to seek the choice water of a sequestered spring.

Valerius clearly alludes to these lines in his Hylas episode. In Book 3, line 530, he cites *processerat ultra* in the same metrical *sedes*:

e quibus Herculeo Dryope percussa fragore,
cum fugerent iam tela ferae, processerat ultra
turbatum visura nemus fontemque petebat
rursus et attonitos referebat ab Hercule vultus. (Argon. 3.529–32)

Of these (sc. *nymphs*) Dryope, hearing the crash of Hercules' advance, as the quarry fled before the shafts, had gone forward to view the havoc of the grove, and was returning to her spring, bringing back from Hercules an awe-struck face.

Moreover, in the next line Valerius has *fontemque petebat*, which reminds us of Propertius' *quaerere fontis (aquam)*.⁴ Only this time it is not a 'he', but the nymph Dryope, who will pull Hylas into the spring about thirty lines later.

In this article I propose that Valerius' allusion points to a metapoetical play with Propertius on generic issues. I will argue that Propertius' *elegiac* Hylas poem metapoetically reacts to earlier versions of the myth, notably the epic version by Apollonius of Rhodes, and claims to 'have gone further'. Valerius, in his turn, incorporates elements of two stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that have strong similarities with Propertius' 1.20 (the Narcissus and Hermaphroditus episodes), into his *epic* Hylas episode. In this way Valerius, in his turn, innovates with the story of Hylas and he metapoetically comments on this move, using the same words as Propertius.

III. PROPERTIUS' 'NARCISSISTIC' HYLAS

The role of Hylas in the various accounts of the story is very similar. Already in Theocritus' thirteenth *Idyll* and Apollonius' *Argonautica* he is a beautiful boy and the *eromenos* of Hercules.⁵ He is pulled into the water by one or more nymphs who have fallen in love with him—one anonymous nymph in Apollonius, three named nymphs in Theocritus. In both Theocritus and Apollonius the emotions of the nymphs are elaborately described, but Hylas' emotions are not even mentioned: he is a mere victim of the nymphs' passion. In Propertius 1.20, however, Hylas does not seem to be quite so passive. After being harassed by the Argonauts Zetes and Calais, he arrives at a spring called Pege:

*libri IV*³ (Leipzig, 1932), xxiv; P. J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii elegiarum liber I (Monobiblos)* (Leiden, 1946), 2.184 *ad* 1.20.23; Colton (n. 1), 36; R. Hanslik, *Sex. Propertii elegiarum libri IV* (Leipzig, 1979), 33. The subject-switch from Hylas to Dryope has been noted, but not interpreted, by Postgate, Enk and Colton (see above).

⁴ The parallel is mentioned by Grüneberg (n. 3), 88 and Colton (n. 1), 36.

⁵ See M. M. DeForest, *Apollonius' Argonautica: A Callimachean Epic* (Leiden, 1994), 62ff. for the (less obvious) erotic relationship between Heracles and Hylas in Apollonius' *Argonautica*.

quam supra nullae pendebant debita curae 35
 roscida desertis poma sub arboribus
 et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato
candida purpureis mixta papaveribus.
 quae modo **decerpens tenero** pueriliter **ungui**
 proposito **florem** praetulit officio 40
 et modo formosis **incumbens nescius** undis
errorem blandis tardat imaginibus. (Prop. 1.20.35–42)

Overhead from deserted trees hung dewy apples, owing naught to the hand of man, and round about in the water-meadow grew white lilies mingled with crimson poppies. Now in boyish delight **plucking** these **with delicate nail**, putting **flowers** before his appointed task, and now **unwarily bending** over the beautiful pool, he prolongs his **truaney** because of its charming reflections.

Hylas is attracted by the *locus amoenus* with its ‘treacherously seductive and even sinister beauty’⁶ and forgets his *officium*, fetching water for Hercules. Instead he starts picking the flowers. The significance of this act is underlined by an allusion to Catullus 62:⁷

ut **flos** in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis
 . . .
multi illum pueri, multae optavere puellae:
 idem cum **tenui carptus** defloruit **ungui**,
nulli illum pueri, nullae optavere puellae:
 sic virgo, dum intacta manet, dum cara suis est. (Catull. 62.39, 42–5)

As a **flower** springs up secretly in a fenced garden ... *many boys, many girls desire it*; when the same flower fades, **plucked by a delicate nail**, *no boys, no girls desire it*: so a maiden, while she remains untouched, the while is she dear to her own.

The flower is of course a symbol of virginity⁸ and we can anticipate that Hylas will soon lose his virginity. But *he* is doing the picking and does not seem to be the passive beloved of the earlier versions of the story.⁹ In fact, in lines 41–2 he even seems to be falling in love with himself. These lines immediately bring to mind Ovid’s Narcissus episode, which seems to have been inspired by Propertius. Reminded of Ovid, we may see Hylas’ *error* in line 42 consisting not only of lingering by a dangerous pool but also of falling in love with his own beautiful reflection. The moment that Hylas touches the water, longing for water or for his own reflection, he is pulled in by the nymphs.

There are more resemblances between Ovid’s Narcissus and Propertius 1.20:¹⁰

⁶ P. Murgatroyd, ‘Setting in six versions of the Hylas myth’, in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 6 (Brussels, 1992), 84–93, at 93. Murgatroyd shows that the details of Propertius’ landscape symbolically evoke an ambiguous ambience of love and death. See also P. L. Thomas, ‘Red and white: a Roman color symbol’, *RhM* 122 (1979), 310–16, at 311, for the red–white colour contrast between the white lilies and the crimson poppies in 1.20.37–8, a contrast that often indicates present or imminent danger and death. For a similar analysis of the setting of Ovid’s Hermaphroditus episode see C. P. Segal, *Landscape in Ovid’s Metamorphoses: A Study in the Transformations of a Literary Symbol* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 26.

⁷ The words in italics will be discussed on pp. 609–10, the underlinings in Prop. 1.20 on p. 610.

⁸ See Segal (n. 6), 33ff. for an account of the symbolic meaning of (picking) flowers in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.

⁹ As noted by H. Diller, ‘Herakles und Hylas—Theokrit und Properz’, in E. Lefèvre (ed.), *Monumentum Chiloniense: Studien zur augusteischen Zeit. Kieler Festschrift für E. Burck zum 70. Geburtstag* (Amsterdam, 1975), 419–31, at 430–1.

¹⁰ The similarities between the Ovidian passage and lines 33–41 of Propertius 1.20 are underlined. The words marked in bold will be discussed in Section IV below.

hic puer et studio venandi lassus et aestu
 procubuit faciemque loci fontemque secutus,
 dumque sitim sedare cupit, sitis altera crevit, 415
 dumque bibit, visae correptus imagine formae
 spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod umbra est.
 . . .
 quid videat, nescit; sed quod videt, uritur illo, 430
 atque oculos idem, qui decipit, incitat error.
 credule, quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas?
 quod petis, est nusquam; quod amas, avertere, perdes!
 ista repercussae, quam cernis, imaginis umbra est. (*Met.* 3.413–18, 430–4)

Here the youth, **worn by the chase and the heat, lies down**, attracted by the appearance of the place and by the spring. While he seeks to slake his thirst another thirst springs up, and while he drinks he is smitten **by the reflection of the beautiful form** he sees. He loves an unsubstantial hope and thinks that substance which is only **shadow**. . . . What he sees he knows not; but that which he sees he burns for, and the same delusion mocks and allures his eyes. O fondly foolish boy, why vainly seek to clasp a fleeting image? What you seek is nowhere; but turn yourself away, and the object of your love will be no more. That which you behold is but the **shadow of a reflected form**.

In addition to the fact that both Narcissus and Hylas arrive at a *locus amoenus*, Narcissus is, like Propertius' Hylas, an active lover: he longs for himself and is smitten by the *imago* of his own beauty, just as Propertius' Hylas prolongs his *error* by looking at his own beautiful reflection (*blandis* . . . *imaginibus*, 42). The *error* of Narcissus is mentioned in line 431. Narcissus and Hylas are also both *nescius*: Narcissus does not know what he sees (430), and Hylas is 'unwarily' leaning over the pool (41). In the first instance this refers to Hylas' not knowing that there is a nymph in the pool who is going to grab him, but after the next line (42), it could just as well refer to the fact that Hylas is unaware that he is looking at his own reflection. Baker rightly notes that the word *officium* in line 40 can in erotic contexts mean 'duty towards one's beloved', and that this meaning may be activated here to suggest that Hylas is so preoccupied with his own reflection as to be guilty of virtual infidelity to Hercules.¹¹

A more general point of comparison between Ovid's Narcissus episode and Propertius' poem is the Zetes and Calais passage of Propertius 1.20. This element is possibly a Propertian innovation: in no other known version of the story Hylas is chased by the two Boreads. The primary function of the episode is to stress Hylas' beauty and popularity with men as well as women; first he is harassed by Zetes and Calais, then he is pulled into the water by nymphs. Hylas rejects Zetes and Calais, though, and he is able to flee from them. He is also unwillingly pulled into the water. Narcissus rejects both male and female suitors (including a nymph): he only loves himself.

Propertius and Ovid also have a shared intertext. As I demonstrated above, Propertius alludes to Catullus 62. Ovid in his Narcissus episode alludes to the same passage, though not the same line. At the beginning of the Narcissus episode, Ovid has two echoing lines that anticipate the echoing of Echo later on in the episode. These lines also contain an intertextual echo of Catullus 62:¹²

¹¹ R. J. Baker, *Propertius I*² (Warminster, 2000), 180 ad 1.20.40.

¹² The Catullan lines are echoed in their turn, incidentally, in two later lines (53, 55) in Catullus 62. For the contact between the passages see J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Allusion* (Oxford, 1996), 280–1 and S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998), 5–8.

*multi illum iuvenes, multae cupiere puellae;
sed fuit in tenera tam dura superbia forma,
nulli illum iuvenes, nullae tetigere puellae.* (Met. 3.353–5)

Many youths and many maidens sought his love; but in that slender form was pride so cold that no youth, no maiden touched his heart.

But the passage also indirectly points to Propertius 1.20: the Catullan line to which Propertius alludes in 1.20.39 (see above) is also alluded to by Ovid in the line between the two echoing Catullan lines (354).

When one reads Propertius 1.20 after having read Ovid's Narcissus episode, it is impossible not to be reminded of Narcissus. Baker and Rothstein¹³ seem to underline this, when they interpret 1.20 in this Ovidian way, seeing Hylas as falling in love with himself. It is very likely that Propertius was influenced by a (now lost) earlier version of the Narcissus myth¹⁴ and that Ovid alludes through Propertius to this version.¹⁵ At any rate, Ovid's Narcissus seems to allude to Propertius' Hylas and suggest that Propertius' Hylas is 'Narcissistic'.

IV. VALERIUS FLACCUS' OVIDIAN HYLAS

Now let us turn to Valerius Flaccus at last; he at least seems to have read Propertius' Hylas in an Ovidian way:¹⁶

cum puerum instantem quadripes fessaque minantem
tela manu procul ad nitidi spiracula fontis
ducit et intactas levis ipse superfugit undas.
hoc pueri spes lusa modo est nec tendere certat 555
amplius; utque artus et concita pectora sudor
diluerat, gratos **avidus procumbit** ad amnes.
stagna vaga sic luce micant ubi Cynthia caelo
prospicit aut medii transit rota candida Phoebi,
tale iubar diffundit aquis: nil **umbra** comaeque 560
turbavitque sonus surgentis ad oscula nymphae.
illa **avidas** iniecta manus heu sera cientem
auxilia et magni referentem nomen amici
detrahit, adiutae prono nam pondere vires. (Argon. 3.552–64)

when, as the boy pressed on and with weary arm threatened a shot, the stag led him far onward to where a bright fountain gushed forth, and with light bound itself sprang clear over the pool. Thus is the lad's hope baffled nor is he bent on further competition; and when sweat had bathed his limbs and labouring breast, **he greedily sank** beside the pleasant stream. Even as the light that shifts and plays upon a lake, when Cynthia looks forth from heaven or the bright wheel of

¹³ M. Rothstein, *Die Elegien des Sextus Propertius*² (Hildesheim, 1920), 198 ad 1.20.41.

¹⁴ Rothstein (n. 13), 197 ad 1.20.39: 'auf die Ausmalung des Einzelnen hat unverkennbar die Sage von Narcissus ... eingewirkt'; P. Fedeli, *Il primo libro delle elegie* (Florence, 1980), 478–9 ad 1.20.41: 'sulla rappresentazione properziana di Ila . . . ha esercitato il suo influsso la nota leggenda di Narciso'.

¹⁵ For this kind of allusion to both a model (A) and to that model's model (B), thus recognizing that the model of A is B, the terms 'window allusion / reference' and 'two-tier allusion' are current. For this type of allusion see, e.g. R. F. Thomas, 'Virgil's *Georgics* and the art of reference', *HSCPh* 90 (1986), 171–98, at 188–9 (= id. *Reading Virgil and His Texts: Studies in Intertextuality* [Ann Arbor, 1999], 130–2).

¹⁶ In discussing the correspondences between Valerius Flaccus' Hylas episode and Ovid's Narcissus and Hermaphroditus episodes, I have made much use of the parallels noted by Malamud and McGuire (n. 1), 203ff.; similarities with Ovid's Narcissus episode (quoted above) are marked in bold. The underlined *umbra* will be discussed on p. 612.

Phoebus in mid course passes by, such a gleam did he shed upon the waters; he did not heed the **shadow** of the Nymph or her hair or the sound of her as she rose to embrace him. **Greedily** casting her arms about him, as he called—alas!—too late for help, and uttered the name of his mighty friend, she drew him down and her strength was aided by his falling weight.

First of all, it is interesting to note that in Valerius Flaccus, Hylas is not going to the spring to fetch water, as is the case in all the earlier versions we have. Hylas is chasing a stag, which Juno has sent to lure him to the nymph Dryope, to whom she has promised him.¹⁷ When the stag jumps over the spring, the exhausted Hylas gives up the chase, lies down (*procumbit*) and wants to quench his thirst. Dryope then pulls him into the spring. So, in Valerius' version Hylas has become a hunter, like Narcissus, who was also chasing deer¹⁸ and, when he got tired, lay down (*procubuit*, *Met.* 3.414) and quenched his thirst.

In Ovid, Narcissus' thirst is also metaphorically used of his thirst for his own reflection. In Valerius something similar seems to be the case. When Hylas lies down *avidus*, 'greedily', by the pool, this word at first simply seems to refer to his thirst, but the metaphorical meaning 'thirst for love' should also be taken into account, especially since other words that describe Hylas' emotions have erotic connotations as well.¹⁹ A few lines later this interpretation of *avidus* is confirmed when Dryope's hands, at the moment they grab Hylas, are described as *avidas*. So Valerius' Hylas, through Ovid's Narcissus, resembles Propertius' Hylas.

It is interesting that Valerius makes not only Hylas *avidus*, but Dryope as well. Here I would like to return to the allusion discussed at the start of this article (Section II, pp. 606–7). There we also saw Dryope doing something that Hylas did in Propertius: *processerat ultra*. I suggest that Valerius has gone some steps beyond Propertius' innovation in the story, exploiting the Ovidian intertext in full: Hylas and Dryope seem to be, or become, in some way, one and the same person. The etymology of their names also points in this direction: Hylas is derived from Greek ὕλη,²⁰ 'wood', 'forest', Dry-ope from Greek δρῦς, 'oak-tree'. We know from Apollonius of Rhodes (*Argon.* 1.1213) that Hylas' father, Theiodamas, was king of the Δρύοιες. So, Dryopian Hylas is a male Dryope. Nicander seems to provide an interesting parallel, or maybe even model, for exploiting the etymological link between the names Hylas and Dryope: according to Antoninus Liberalis' summary, Nicander, in his now lost *Heteroeumena* ('Metamorphoses') told the story of a girl Dryope—a Dryopian, just like Hylas—who was abducted by nymphs and hidden in the ὕλη.²¹

¹⁷ See p. 617 for discussion of the clear allusion to *Aeneid* 7, where Ascanius is chasing a stag.

¹⁸ *Met.* 3.356, *hunc trepidos agitantem in retia cervos* ('once as he was driving the frightened deer into his nets').

¹⁹ As Malamud and McGuire (n. 1), 203 note, Hylas is described as *ferox ardore*, 'fierce with desire' (549), desire for his prey, but metaphorically also for himself. The 'untouched waters' (*intactas* . . . *undas*, 554) and the 'pleasing stream' (*gratos amnes*, 557) of the pool also have erotic connotations.

²⁰ See D. Petrain, 'Hylas and *silva*: etymological wordplay in Propertius 1.20', *HSCPh* 100 (2000), 409–21, who argues convincingly for an etymological wordplay on Hylas and ὕλη in Propertius 1.20. For puns on this etymology see 'Tropes of intertextuality in Roman epic', in A. Barchiesi, *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and Other Latin Poets* (London, 2001), 129–40, 185–9, at 189, n. 41. See also below.

²¹ Ant. Lib. 32.4: καὶ εἰς τοῦτο παρ<ι>οῦσαν τὸ ἱερὸν Δρύοπην ἤρπασαν Ἀμαδρυνάδες νύμφαι κατ' εὐμένειαν καὶ αὐτὴν μὲν ἀπέκρυψαν εἰς τὴν ὕλην ('One day, as Dryope was approaching the temple [*i.e.* of Apollo], the hamadryad nymphs gathered her up affectionately and hid her in the woods'; translation taken from F. Celoria, *The Metamorphoses of Antoninus Liberalis* [London, 1992]).

How far does Valerius' implicit identification of Hylas and Dryope go? In a strange scene before his abduction (558–61), Hylas is described as spreading a gleam (*iubar*) over the pool. This gleam, reflected in the pool, seems to blind him, because he does not see the *umbra* of Dryope approaching to kiss him; nor does he hear the *sonus* of her approach. In this scene Valerius seems to combine Propertius' version with Ovid's Narcissus episode. The *iubar* recalls the *candor* of Hylas in Propertius 1.20.45, which excites the nymphs. On the other hand, the fact that Hylas sees (or is blinded by) a gleam that he himself produces, recalls Narcissus, who sees in the pool a reflection of his own eyes, described as stars (*geminum sidus*) in line 420. The comparison of Hylas' *iubar* with the rays of the sun (*Phoebus*) and the moon (*Cynthia*) underlines this. By analogy with Narcissus and his reflection, Hylas and Dryope seem to be in some way assimilated.

Furthermore, as we saw, Dryope is described as a *sonus* and an *umbra*. This is exactly how Hylas himself is described later on in Valerius' narrative, as Malamud and McGuire have pointed out.²² In Book 4 of the *Argonautica* Hylas will visit his friend Hercules in a dream as an *umbra*:

ille ultro petit et vacuis amplexibus instat
languentisque movet frustra conamina dextrae:
corpus hebet somno refugaque eluditur umbra. (Argon. 4.39–41)

eagerly the other (*i.e.* *Hercules*) seeks to seize him, urgent with unsatisfied embrace, and plies in vain the effort of his languid arm; but his body is dull with slumber and is foiled by the fugitive shade.

Hylas will also become a *sonus*. When Hercules cries out Hylas' name, he is answered by the woods, *silvae*, and this is described as an *imago*, an echo:

rursus Hylan et rursus Hylan per longa reclamat
avia: responsant silvae et vaga certat imago. (Argon. 3.596–7)

'Hylas' and yet again 'Hylas' he calls through the pathless distances; the forests answer him, and the wandering echo emulates his cry.

Silva, however, can translate ὕλη,²³ the ancient etymology for Hylas. It seems that Hylas is responding to Hercules' cries, but as an echo. According to Antoninus Liberalis, in Nicander's version of the Hylas myth in his *Heteroeumena*, the nymphs actually turned Hylas into an echo.²⁴ Theocritus reflects this motif in his version of the Hylas myth:

τρίς μὲν Ὑλαν αὔσεν, ὅσον βαθὺς ἤρυγε λαϊμός·
τρίς δ' ἄρ' ὁ παῖς ὑπάκουσεν, ἀραιὰ δ' ἔκετο φωνά
ἐξ ὕδατος, παρεών δὲ μάλα σχεδὸν εἶδετο πόρρω. (Id. 13.58–60)

²² Malamud and McGuire (n. 1), 207, 213.

²³ *Silva* and ὕλη can both mean 'forest', 'wood' (*OLD* 1, 2; *LSJ* I, II), but *silva* can also metaphorically represent '(literary) material' (*OLD* 5[b]; the normal term is *materia*) and thus translate ὕλη (*LSJ* III.[3]). See p. 00 (with n. 35) below for ὕλη and *silva* as 'poetic subject-matter'.

²⁴ Ant. Lib. 26.4: νύμφαι δὲ δέισασαι τὸν Ἡρακλέα, μὴ αὐτὸν εὗροι κρυπτόμενον παρ' αὐταῖς, μετέβαλον τὸν Ὑλαν καὶ ἐποίησαν ἡχώ καὶ πρὸς τὴν βοήην πολλάκις ἀντεφώνησεν Ἡρακλεῖ ('The nymphs, fearing that Heracles might discover that they had hidden the lad among them, changed him into an echo which again and again echoed back the cries of Heracles'; translation taken from Celoria [n. 21]).

'Hylas' he shouted thrice with all the power of his deep throat, and thrice the boy replied, but faint came his answering cry from the water, and far off he seemed though very near at hand.²⁵

The reply of Hylas has much in common with an echo: three cries, three replies, and the answer is distant and faint. Furthermore, *τρίς* and *ὑπάκουσεν* in 59 echo *τρίς* and *ἄυσεν* in the previous line.²⁶ The strange thing, however, is that the sound comes *ἐξ ὕδατος*, from the water. Propertius here seems to react to Theocritus. He has Hercules responding to the cry (*sonitum*) that Hylas utters, when he is pulled into the water:

tum sonitum raptō corpore fecit Hylas.
cui procul Alcides ter 'Hyla' respondet; at* illi
nomen ab extremis fontibus** aura refert. (Prop. 1.20.48–50)

* ter 'Hyla' respondet at *Fontein*: iterat responsa sed *mss.*

** fontibus *mss.*; montibus *Heinsius*

then at the snatching of his body did Hylas make a loud sound. In answer Hercules from afar thrice called out 'Hylas!', but from the depths of the spring the breeze returns the name.

The triple cry of Propertius' Hercules in line 49 alludes to Theocritus.²⁷ Then, from the water, comes the echo in line 50; *fontibus* is the 'codicum consensus', but most editors²⁸ print Heinsius' *montibus*, surely because this produces a more logical echo. Bonanno has proposed, however, that *fontibus* alludes to Theocritus' strange combination of answering from the water and echoing.²⁹ Propertius has made the echo more explicit than Theocritus with an *aura* that carries the name Hylas back to Hercules, but he clearly implies that Hylas is replying as an echo.³⁰

V. VALERIUS AND PROPERTIUS: HYLAS AND SILVA

Valerius, in his turn, reacts to Propertius' echo. As Petrain has shown, Propertius 1.20 contains an etymological play on Hylas and ὕλη through *silva*, the equivalent of the latter. This play is highlighted, for instance, by the placement of *Hylae* and *silvae* at the end of two successive lines (6–7).³¹ As we have seen, Valerius also links Hylas with *silva*, but he seems to take the wordplay a step further and (in a sense) to correct Propertius. He has also turned Hylas into an echo, but a more logical one. Hylas replies as an echo not from the water, but as *silvae*, the woods that Hylas represents according to his name. As Barchiesi has suggested, Valerius' *vaga certat imago* is a

²⁵ Translation taken from A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge, 1950), vol. 1.

²⁶ M. G. Bonanno, *L'allusione necessaria: ricerche intertestuali sulla poesia greca e latina* (Rome, 1990), 195–6.

²⁷ See G. P. Goold, 'Paralipomena Propertiana', *HSCPh* 94 (1992), 287–320, at 294, for arguments in favour of Fontein's reading.

²⁸ E.g. E. A. Barber, *Sexti Properti Carmina*² (Oxford, 1960); P. Fedeli, *Propertius* (Stuttgart, 1984); G. P. Goold, *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, MA, 1990).

²⁹ Bonanno (n. 26), 197–201.

³⁰ For Virgil's reaction to Theocritus *Id.* 13.58–60 in his rather short version of the Hylas story (*Ecl.* 6.43–4) see Bonanno (n. 26), 195–7. For the influence of Virgil's echo on Valerius Flaccus see Barchiesi (n. 20), 139–40.

³¹ Petrain (n. 20) refers to J. J. O'Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbor, 1996), 86–8, who has noted that 'Virgil frequently uses just this technique of "vertical juxtaposition" to highlight his etymologies' (p. 410).

metapoetical comment, summarizing the subtle game of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*:³² his echo emulates the ones before, notably that of Propertius.

Valerius' Hylas becomes an *imago* and an *umbra*. Interestingly, these two terms, *imago* and *umbra*, are combined in Ovid's Narcissus episode. There Narcissus' reflection is said to be an *imaginis umbra* (434). This collocation probably lies behind Valerius' terminology. We should also bear in mind that not only reflection, but also echoing plays an important role in the Narcissus episode. The nymph Echo, rejected by Narcissus, becomes a *sonus* (*Met.* 3.401), just like Hylas, lending her name to (and providing an etymology for) the echo.

Valerius' Hylas alludes to Propertius' Hylas through Ovid's Narcissus and thus seems to be a Narcissus-like Hylas. Except that in Valerius' version it is not really his own reflection that Hylas loves: Hylas and the nymph Dryope seem to have become one and the same person after the abduction, just like Narcissus and the object of his desire were one and the same person. Valerius has thus created his own metamorphosis of Hylas.

VI. SALMACIS AND HERMAPHRODITUS

There is a story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which exactly what I have just described happens: two characters, a nymph and a boy, become one. I am of course referring to Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, and this story is also an important intertext for Valerius' Hylas episode.

There are more similarities between Valerius' narrative and the Hermaphroditus story than just the merging of two characters. The setting in both is a pool with very clear water. Salmacis and Dryope are both nymphs and hunters and they both fall in love with and rape a beautiful boy. When Salmacis sees Hermaphroditus and falls in love, her eyes shine like the sun reflected in a mirror:

tum vero placuit, nudaque cupidine formae
Salmacis exarsit, flagrant quoque lumina Nymphae,
non aliter quam cum puro nitidissimus orbe
opposita speculi referitur imagine Phoebus. (*Met.* 4.346–9)

Then did he truly attract her, and the nymph's love kindled as she gazed at the naked form. Her eyes shone bright as when the sun's dazzling face is reflected from the surface of a glass held opposite its rays.

This comparison reminds us of Valerius' *Argonautica*, where the gleam that Hylas sheds on the pool is compared with the sun (*Phoebus*) shining on the water. Moreover, as Hylas sheds a gleam on the water, so Hermaphroditus gleams while swimming in the pool, just before the nymph rapes him:

ille cavis velox adplauso corpore palmis
desilit in latices alternaque brachia ducens
in liquidis translucet aquis, ut eburnea si quis
signa tegat claro vel candida lilia vitro. (*Met.* 4.352–5)

He, clapping his body with hollow palms, dives into the pool, and swimming with alternate strokes flashes with gleaming body through the transparent flood, as if one should encase ivory figures or white lilies in translucent glass.

³² Barchiesi (n. 20), 140.

Finally, the blush of Hermaphroditus earlier in the story, when Salmacis asks him to marry her, is compared with the appearance of the moon in eclipse.

... pueri rubor ora notavit;
nescit, enim, quid amor; sed et erubuisse decebat:
hic color aprica pendentibus arbore pomis
aut ebori tincto est aut sub candore rubenti,
cum frustra resonant aera auxiliaria, lunae. (Met. 4.329–33)

But the boy blushed rosy red; for he knew not what love is. But still the blush became him well. Such colour have apples hanging in sunny orchards, or painted ivory; such has the moon, eclipsed, red under white, when brazen vessels clash vainly for her relief.

Comparably, Hylas' *iubar* in Valerius is likened to the shining of the moon (558–60 above). A reason for this allusion to the Ovidian episode may be the fact that in Ovid the Hermaphroditus episode is closely connected to the Narcissus episode.³³ Apart from the verbal similarities, there is a *fons* and a symbolic landscape,³⁴ which attracts both Narcissus and Hermaphroditus, and a one-sided love: Hermaphroditus rejects Salmacis as Narcissus rejects Echo. And just as Narcissus and his beloved, his reflection, are one and the same, so Salmacis and her beloved will become one and the same.

The parallels between the Hermaphroditus episode and Propertius 1.20 may also account for the similarities between Valerius' and Ovid's episodes. Hylas in 1.20 is picking flowers which has, as described above, connotations of the loss of virginity. In Ovid it is Salmacis who is picking flowers, which here prefigures the loss of virginity of Hermaphroditus, of which she indeed will be the cause: she is picking his flower.

I think, however, that the allusion to the Ovidian metamorphosis should also be read on a metapoetical level: Valerius, in his version of the Hylas myth, merges all kinds of different characters into one, reflecting a long literary tradition that switches the identities of active and passive lovers. Not only the merging of Dryope and Hylas is like the merging of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, but also that of several characters from literary history into Valerius' Hylas and Dryope (notably Ovid's Narcissus and Propertius' Hylas), and Valerius has used this merging as a self-reflexive trope to describe what he has done in his Hylas episode.

VII. A METAPOETICAL READING OF PROPERTIUS 1.20

I will return to the allusion discussed at the start of this paper. I propose that Valerius' words *processerat ultra* and *fontemque petebat* (3.530–1) also invite a metaliterary interpretation and that this retrojects the same possibility on the corresponding lines of Propertius.

As we have seen, there is an etymological wordplay in Propertius 1.20 on Hylas and ὕλη, through its Latin equivalent *silva*. Both words, ὕλη and *silva*, can be used to denote (poetic) subject matter³⁵ and this is what Propertius is looking for. He innovates within the story and he comments on this in the poem: his Hylas has 'moved

³³ P. Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge, 2002), 146, calls the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus episode 'a doublet of the Narcissus story': cf. Malamud and McGuire (n. 1), 205.

³⁴ See Segal (n. 6) on the use of water (pp. 23–6) and flowers (pp. 34–5) in these two episodes as symbols of virginity as well as its loss.

³⁵ See K. M. Coleman, *Statius: Silvae IV* (Oxford, 1988), xxii–xxiii; Hinds (n. 12), 12–14; Petrain (n. 20), 412. See also n. 23 above.

on' to seek the rare water of a remote *fons*. As Petrain shows, Propertius here alludes to two well-known metapoetical passages in Callimachus that use water imagery. His *rara aqua* reminds us of the pure (καθαρή) and undefiled (ἄχράαντος) spring in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*.³⁶

Διοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,
ἀλλ' ἥτις καθαρή τε καὶ ἄχράαντος ἀνέρπει
πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον. (Ap. 110–12)

The bees bring water to Deo not from every source but where it bubbles up **pure** and **undefiled** from a holy spring, its very essence.³⁷

Sepositi fontis, on the other hand, recalls a famous epigram:

Ἐχθαίρω τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν, οὐδὲ κελεύθῳ
χαίρω, τίς πολλοὺς ὤδε καὶ ὤδε φέρει·
μισέω καὶ περίφοιτον ἐρώμενον, οὐδ' ἀπὸ κρήνης
πίνω· σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια.
Λυσανίη, σὺ δὲ ναίχι καλὸς καλός—ἀλλὰ πρὶν εἰπεῖν
τοῦτο σαφῶς, Ἥχῳ φησί τις· ἄλλος ἔχει. (Epigr. 28 P)

I hate recycled poetry, and get no pleasure from a road crowded with travellers this way and that. I can't stand a boy who sleeps around, **don't drink at public fountains**, and loathe everything vulgar. Now you, Lysaniēs, sure are handsome . . . But before I've repeated 'handsome', Echo's 'and some . . . one else's' cuts me off.³⁸

Just as Callimachus will not drink from the source that everyone else uses, Hylas will go deep into the woods to find a spring that is 'set apart'. Petrain sees this as 'an affirmation of Callimachean aesthetics in miniature',³⁹ and I agree. I also think, however, that Petrain has missed something: he does not interpret *processerat ultra* as part of the metapoetic statement, but because Valerius Flaccus repeats these words in a similar metapoetical context, they must be significant, at least to Valerius. Propertius, in Valerius' view, announces that his version of the Hylas story will be innovative, that it will 'go further'. Immediately after these two metapoetical verses, he includes a novel episode, where Hylas is harassed by Zetes and Calais. Further on, he creates a novel Hylas, who is an active, flower picking lover. Valerius has interpreted Propertius' words, including *processerat ultra*, as metapoetical and uses them for himself in a similar way.

In Valerius, however, it is not Hylas, but the nymph who 'has gone further': it is through the nymph that Valerius has innovated. Taking his lead from Propertius' new and improved Hylas, Valerius creates a new nymph, finding inspiration in two episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that had already found inspiration in Propertius, or at least have too many similarities with 1.20 to miss. Ovid's Narcissus, Salmacis, Hermaphroditus and Propertius' Hylas, and also Nicander's Dryope and Hylas, seem to have merged and become one, like Salmacis and Hermaphroditus.

³⁶ The underlinings will be discussed on pp. 617f.

³⁷ Translation taken from F. Nisetich, *The Poems of Callimachus* (Oxford, 2001).

³⁸ See previous note.

³⁹ Petrain (n. 20), 414.

VIII. VALERIUS' AND PROPERTIUS' HYLAS: FROM ELEGY BACK TO EPIC

I think, however, that this is just the beginning and that the words *processerat ultra* in both texts also mark a metapoetical play on genre. Valerius lets his Dryope *return* to the spring (*fontemque petebat / rursus*, 531–2) and he thus signals that after Propertius' elegiac version, he is now restoring the Hylas story to epic, writing the first epic version of the story since Apollonius.⁴⁰ The fact that Hylas is hunting in Valerius' version should also be seen in this light, namely as opposed to the elegiac flower-picking of Propertius' Hylas. The similarities of Valerius' Hylas with Ovid's Narcissus, chasing a deer, but especially the clear allusions to Ascanius' hunting a stag in *Aen.* 7.475ff.⁴¹ strengthen Valerius' association of hunting with epic and the consequent contrast with elegy.⁴²

So Valerius has gone further than Propertius with his Hylas version and he has returned to an epic source: Apollonius, but also Virgil's *Aeneid*. But what about Propertius? He also implicitly claims to have gone further and to have found inspiration for his Hylas in a (Callimachean) source. Propertius seems to react to Apollonius' epic version of the story: in the programmatic line 24 of 1.20 he has ingeniously combined the just-mentioned allusion to Callimachean poetics with an allusion to Apollonius:

*raram*⁴³ sepositi *quaerere fontis aquam*

to search the choice water of a sequestered spring (Prop. 1.20.24)

διζήτο κρήνης ἑρὸν ῥόον

<Hylas> sought the sacred flow of a spring (Argon. 1.1208)

⁴⁰ Cf. Barchiesi (n. 20), 188, n. 39, on the metapoetical connotation of *rursus* in *Argon.* 3.596: “‘once again’ expresses both the phonic and intertextual reiteration of the name <Hylas>”. Although *referebat* in the same line (532) of course literally means ‘bring back’ (subject Dryope), it also has a similar metapoetical connotation: see Wills (n. 12), 30–1 on ‘external markers’ for allusion (among which *refero*); cf. Barchiesi (n. 20), *ibid.* on *reclamat* in *Argon.* 3.596 as a reaction to *clamasset* in *Ecl.* 6.45: ‘*reclamat*, coming after the Virgilian *clamasset*, is a gloss on this process of replicating what has already been said/written’. Valerius’ *referebat* is comparable to Propertius’ *refert* in 1.20.50: the *aura* brings back (*refert*) the name Hylas *ab extremis fontibus*, literally ‘from the depths of the spring’, but metapoetically ‘from the farthest / oldest (literary) sources’. For Valerius’ reworking of Apollonius’ Hylas episode see e.g. D. Hershkovitz, *Valerius Flaccus’ Argonautica: Abbreviated Voyages in Silver Latin Epic* (Oxford, 1998), 148ff.

⁴¹ On these allusions to Virgil see H. H. Koch, *Die Hylasgeschichte bei Apollonios Rhodios* (Arg. 1.1153 ff.), *Theokrit (Eidyllion XIII), Properz (Elegie 1.20), Valerius Flaccus* (Arg. 3.459 ff.) (Diss., Kiel, 1955), 135–6; R.W. Garson, ‘The Hylas episode in Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, *CQ* 13 (1963), 260–7, at 262; Malamud and McGuire (n. 1), 202; Hershkovitz (n. 40), 152–3.

⁴² For a survey of the tension between epic and elegy in Valerius’ *Argonautica* see D. C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991), 320ff.; T. Stover, ‘Confronting Medea: genre, gender & allusion in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus’ *CPh* 98 (2003), 123–47.

⁴³ As described above (p. 616), Petrain (n. 20) takes *raram* to refer to *καθαρή* and *ἀχράαντος* at the end of Callimachus’ *Hymn to Apollo*, but maybe *sacram* should be read in 1.20.24; see S. J. Heyworth, *Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius* (Oxford, 2007), 89: ‘*raram* has puzzled readers: is it just to be rendered “exquisite”, or does it mean that fresh water was scarce, so Hylas had to go a long way? Closer imitation of the Callimachus passage would have been achieved through *puram* (Fontein), which has appropriately positive connotations, or *sacram* (Rutgers), which adds an allusion to Ap. Arg. 1.1208 *κρήνης ἑρὸν ῥόον*.’

Apollonius seems to advocate Callimachean poetics as well, since the *ἱερὸν ῥόον* that Hylas is looking for recalls the 'holy fountain' (*πίδακος . . . ἱερῆς*) in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (quoted and underlined above, Section VII, p. 615). Furthermore, *κρήνης* brings to mind *Epigram* 28 (see above, p. 616). In the first line of this poem Callimachus declares that he hates 'cyclic' epic, that is neo-'Homeric' epic on traditional mythological themes.⁴⁴ In the following lines of the epigram, Callimachus elaborates on this theme by using some metaphors (the well, the road), which also occur in the passage from the *Hymn to Apollo* quoted above and the prologue to the *Aetia* (27–8) respectively and which are clearly metapoetical there:⁴⁵ Callimachus rejects hackneyed poetry from the epic cycle, which keeps 'recycling' traditional epic material.⁴⁶ Apollonius combines the passages from this epigram and *Hymn to Apollo*: Hylas is getting holy, Callimachean water from a *κρήνη*, a well that is often used. Apollonius seems, somewhat paradoxically, to say that he will, in his Hylas episode, combine Callimachean poetics⁴⁷ with epic material that has often been described.⁴⁸

I think, however, that my discussion provides additional evidence that Callimachus wrote a (now lost) elegiac version of the Hylas story in his *Aetia*,⁴⁹ to which both

⁴⁴ N. Hopkinson, *A Hellenistic Anthology* (Cambridge, 1988), 86.

⁴⁵ The metapoetical dimension of *Epigr.* 28 is fiercely opposed by A. Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics* (Princeton, 1995), 388ff., who thinks it is only about love. The first line, however, is explicitly a metapoetical statement, as a result of which the subsequent metaphors should initially be read in a metapoetical way. That the metaphors, at the end of the poem, appear retrospectively to be erotic as well, as Cameron shows, does not affect the metapoetical reading. Cf. M. Asper, *Onomata allotria: zur Genese, Struktur und Funktion poetologischer Metaphern bei Kallimachos* (Stuttgart, 1997), 56–8, who thinks that the poem functions on both a metapoetical and an erotic level.

⁴⁶ Asper (n. 45), 56, n. 140 on *Epigr.* 28: 'κυκλικός changiert wahrscheinlich bewußt zwischen den Bedeutungen "kurrent = abgegriffen" und "zum epischen Kyklos gehörig"'.

⁴⁷ See DeForest (n. 5) for the Callimachean nature of Apollonius' epic and, more specifically, pp. 61–9 for the Hylas episode.

⁴⁸ Probably, the story of Heracles and Hylas had often been told before the Hellenistic age in the many lost epic poems which dealt with Heracles. We know that Kinaithon (eighth century B.C.) dealt with Hylas at least in his *Ἡράκλεια* (schol. Ap. Rhod. 1.1355–57c). Further, Peisandrus of Camirus (sixth century B.C.) wrote a *Herakleia* in two books, mainly following the epic of the same name by a certain Pisinus of Lindos (Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.2.25); there also existed a *Heracleia* by Panyassis (fifth century B.C.) in fourteen books. Cf. R.L. Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection* (Cambridge, 1999), 263: 'certain features of Apollonius' version, particularly the rôle of Polyphemus, suggest a rich tradition now lost to us'.

⁴⁹ In *Argon.* 1.1207 Apollonius' Hylas is said to fetch water with a *κάλπυς*. The scholion ad loc. (= Callim. fr. 596 P) notes: ἀπρεπές δὲ νεανίαν ὑδρίαν βαστάζειν. Ὀμηρος (*Od.* 7.20) δὲ πρεπόντως παρθένον. πιθανώτερον δὲ ἦν ἀμφορέα εἰπεῖν, ὡς Καλλίμαχος ('it is unfitting for a young man to carry a *hydria*; Homer (*Od.* 7.20) speaks appropriately of a girl. It would be more convincing to say *amphoreus*, like Callimachus'). The last remark seems to imply that Callimachus wrote a version of the Hylas myth. See, however, R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus* (Oxford, 1949), 1.410 (on fr. 596): 'at e scholio colligi nequit de Hyla Callimachum narravisse amphoram gestante . . . immo de quolibet iuvene vel viro dixisse potest', following U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, 'Neues von Kallimachos II', in *SB Berlin* (1914), 222–44, at 240: 'offenbar kann der Träger der ἀμφορέας jeder beliebige Knabe gewesen sein'. Pfeiffer suspects that the scholion refers to *Iamb.* 8 (= fr. 198 P), where an Aeginetan race is described, in which men had to run the last *stadium* carrying an ἀμφορέας filled with water. I think, however, that the reference of the scholion would then be too vague; the brevity of the note suggests a reference to a Hylas story of Callimachus. Furthermore, there are some indications that a Hylas story of Callimachus figured in the *Aetia*: frs. 24–5 P and the accompanying schol. Flor. show that Callimachus at least described the meeting between Heracles and Hylas' father Theiodamas. Because of the aetiological nature of the myth (it explained the origin of a cult in Mysia, instituted by Heracles; see Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.4.3) the story would suit the *Aetia* quite well; according to the schol. Flor.

Apollonius⁵⁰ and Propertius are reacting. On this assumption, Apollonius would be more specific in line 1208 and state metapoetically that he will give Callimachus' elegiac version an epic form, albeit one that is in keeping with Callimachus' poetical principles. Propertius, in his turn, would claim to go further and write a really Callimachean, elegiac, non-epic poem about Hylas.

Propertius has carefully prepared this reaction to Apollonius by a series of allusions before offering his own, innovative Hylas story in lines 23–50: *Minyis* in line 4 of 1.20, for example recalls Apollonius, who often uses this word to denote the Argonauts and who even gives an etymological explanation for it in his *Argonautica* (1.229–32). The six-syllable *Theiodamanteo* in line 6 is an allusion to *Argon.* 1.1213, where *Θειοδάμαντος* occurs. Furthermore, the five-syllable patronymic *Athamantidos* in line 19 and, in fact, the whole line, with its wordy description of the Hellespont and the passing through it, is a clear allusion to the first book of Apollonius' epic (926–8):

et iam praeteritis labentem *Athamantidos* undis (Prop. 1.20.19)

And having now glided past the waves of the daughter of Athamas

... ἰστία δ' οὐρῳ
στησάμενοι κούρης *Ἀθαμαντίδος* αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα
εἰσέβαλον ... (Argon. 1.926–8)

... and raising the sails to the breeze they entered the swift stream of the maiden daughter of Athamas

Two lines later Propertius seems to allude to both Apollonius' and Theocritus' Hylas poem:

hic manus heroum, placidis ut constitit oris,
mollia composita litora fronde tegit. (Prop. 1.20.21–2)

Here the band of heroes set foot upon the peaceful shore and covered the ground with a soft carpet of leaves.

ἔνθα δ' ἔπειθ' οἱ μὲν ξύλα κάγκανα, τοὶ δὲ λεχαῖην
φυλλάδα λειμώνων φέρον ἄσπετον ἀμήσαντες
στόρνυσθαι ... (Argon. 1.1182–4)

Hereupon some brought dried wood, others from the meadows leaves for beds which they gathered in abundance for strewing.

(line 50), the Theiodamas episode immediately succeeded a similar story concerning Heracles and the institution of a cult on Lindos. See, e.g. Cameron (n. 45), 428 for the possible Hylas story of Callimachus.

⁵⁰ The relative chronology of the poetry of Callimachus, Apollonius and Theocritus is a notorious and much debated problem (for literature see A. Köhnken, 'Hellenistic chronology: Theocritus, Callimachus, and Apollonius Rhodius', in T. D. Papanghelis and A. Rengakos [edd.], *A Companion to Apollonius Rhodius* [Leiden, 2001]). It seems that these poets, working in the *Μουσείον*, were quite well aware of, and could allude to, each other's work in progress (see Hopkinson [n. 44], 7, for this hypothesis). A similar situation existed in Augustan Rome. See, e.g. Propertius 2.34.65–6, where Propertius appears to know of, and allude to, Virgil's *Aeneid* in progress. Despite this situation described, mainly the priority of Callimachus' *Aetia* in relation to Apollonius' *Argonautica* has been convincingly proposed: see Köhnken (above), 77–80 for strong arguments. See Cameron (n. 45), 250–1, 427–8, for the contact between the two passages concerned.

... πολλοὶ δὲ μίαν στορέσαντο χαμείναν.
 λειμῶν γάρ σφιν ἔκειτο μέγα στιβάδεσσιν ὄνειαρ (Id. 13.33–4)

... but one resting-place they laid for all, for there was a meadow with mighty store of litter for their couches.⁵¹

When we take a closer look, Propertius appears to allude to Apollonius, for both mention (1) the gathering of (2) leaves, two elements that are missing in Theocritus' version. Moreover, the adverbs *hic* and *ἐνθα*, in Propertius and Apollonius respectively at the beginning of lines, are comparable.

So from line 17 we have several allusions to Apollonius' *Argonautica* in only a few lines. This is not very suprising, as lines 17–22 constitute Propertius' mini-*Argonautica* up to the arrival in Mysia. Right at the beginning of this passage (17), Propertius is showing his awareness of the literary tradition: *namque ferunt olim*, 'for long ago, they say'. Ross coined the term 'Alexandrian footnote' for *ferunt* used in this way,⁵² a term that Hinds in his *Allusion and Intertext* defines as follows: 'the signalling of specific allusion by a poet through seemingly general appeals to tradition and report, such as "the story goes" (*fama est*), "they relate" (*ferunt*), or "it is said" (*dicitur*)'.⁵³ In the following six lines, the specific allusions show that Propertius is concisely summarizing Apollonius' epic. Propertius also seems to have marked his transition from epic to elegy in the two lines preceding Propertius' elegiac version proper (23–50): in the hexameter (21) we are still in the epic context with *manus heroum*. At the beginning of the pentameter, the *versus elegiacus* (22), though, we are entering elegy with *mollia*⁵⁴ and in the next line Propertius' new, elegiac Hylas has started.

Philip Hardie said: 'the epigone may function as an implicit literary analyst or critic, anticipating the results of twentieth-century criticism'.⁵⁵ I think Valerius Flaccus has proved this again: his allusion to Propertius' 1.20 has opened up a metapoetical reading of this poem and has revealed a nexus of metapoetical communication on genre, going back to the Hellenistic age and suggesting Callimachus' Hylas as the source.

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⁵¹ See n. 25.

⁵² D. O. Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome* (Cambridge, 1975), 78.

⁵³ Hinds (n. 12), 1–2. See also Wills (n. 12), 30–1 on 'external markers' for allusion.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Baker (n. 11), 102 (on 1.7.19): 'the epithet *mollis* ("soft", "gentle") is regularly applied to poetry by the elegists, to indicate their own sort of poetry. It corresponds to *durus* ("hard", "rough"), which they just as regularly use to describe epic poetry'. I thank Ruurd Nauta for this observation.

⁵⁵ Hardie (n. 2, 1990), 3.